

= BECOME AN INDY PATRON, TODAY! P7 =

THE INDY INDEPENDENT

#228: OCTOBER 2017 • INDYPENDENT.ORG

**EXPANDED EVENT
LISTINGS, P2**

**NYC STATUES WE
LOVE, P12**

**COASTAL CITIES &
CLIMATE CHANGE, P14**

**WHO IS FEMINISM
FOR? P20**

PRINT IS DEAD, LONG LIVE PRINT

COVERAGE STARTS ON PAGE 4





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COMMUNITY CALENDAR



FRI SEP 22

7PM–9:30PM • FREE
BOOK LAUNCH: *WHY BAD
GOVERNMENTS HAPPEN TO
GOOD PEOPLE*

Join Indy contributor, humorist
and author Danny Katch for the
launch of his new book, *Why
Bad Governments Happen to
Good People*.
VERSO BOOKS
20 Jay St.

SAT SEP 23

7:30PM–11PM • \$5–\$10 DONA-
TIONS

TALK: THE RAMAPOUGH VS.
THE PILGRIM PIPELINE
Speakers from the Ramapough
Lenape Nation and Science
for the People will lead a
discussion on the devastat-
ing potential impacts of the
proposed Pilgrim Pipeline on
sacred lands and the Ramapo
River, as well as specific po-
litical actions supporters can
take. Drinks and mingling in the
backyard of Unnameable Books
will follow. Proceeds go to the
Ramapough's legal fees.
UNNAMEABLE BOOKS
600 Vanderbilt Ave.

SAT SEP 23

9PM–1AM • \$10–\$100
PARTY: STARR BAR AND MAY-
DAY ANNIVERSARY BASH

Come mark the one year
anniversary of the activist-
friendly Starr Bar and the lefty
community center Mayday at
this rager. Tickets available at
eventbrite.com.
STARR BAR
214 Starr St.

TUE SEP 26

6:30PM–8:30PM • \$10 DONA-
TION
HISTORY: TRUMP WALKING
TOUR

Prior to becoming president,
Donald Trump played an inte-
gral role in shaping the modern
landscape of New York City.
Exploring Midtown Manhat-
tan, we are able to get the full
spectrum of the Trump story
and his rise to power. Register
at socialjusticetours.com.
53rd St. & 6th Ave.

THU SEP 28

7PM–9PM • FREE
BOOKS: READINGS FROM
VANISHING NEW YORK —
JUST THE QUEER PARTS
From The Rawhide to Folsom
Street East queer New York
is disappearing. Blogger and
author Jeremiah Moss reads
from the queer sections of his
celebrated new book, *Vanish-
ing New York: How a Great City
Lost Its Soul*. Signing to follow.
**BUREAU OF GENERAL SERVIC-
ES-QUEER DIVISION**
208 W 13th St. Rm 210

FRI SEP 29 THRU FRI DEC 22

6PM–8PM, WEEKLY • \$95–
\$125
CLASS: FRIDAYS AS IN MUR-
DER

In traditional hard-boiled and
crime novels, women either
provoke violence as femme
fatales or need protection
as paying clients or wander-
ing daughters. Some authors
were dissatisfied with this
convention. Drawing upon the

potentials of pulp fiction and
film noir's formula of restless-
ness, dread and discontent
within social corruption,
women novelists subverted the
genre to explore early feminist
and political themes. To learn
more, view the reading list and
register, visit marxproject.
org.
BROOKLYN COMMONS
388 Atlantic Ave.

SAT SEP 30

12PM–6PM • FREE
UNDERGROUND LIT: PAPER
JAZZ SMALL PRESS FEST
Paper Jazz Small Press Fest
(formerly Paper Jam) is a twice
yearly celebration of zines,
comics and chapbooks of all
types, fully curated by the
Silent Barn Zine Team, as well
as regularly rotated guest cu-
rators. Silent Barn is dedicated
to maintaining a space for small
presses within the greater DIY
community.
THE SILENT BARN
603 Bushwick Ave

SAT SEP 30

2PM–6PM • \$30
CULTURE: AFRICAN ROOTS IN
LATIN AMERICA PRESENTS:
TRADITIONS OF OUR ANCES-
TORS
Performances and panel
discussions in which African
descendants from Latin Amer-
ica will share their cultural,
folkloric traditions and identity
in the African diaspora.
**BRONX MUSIC HERITAGE
CENTER LABORATORY**
1303 Louis Nine Blvd.

SUN OCT 1

11AM–7PM • FREE
PROTEST: VISIT A GUN SHOW
WITH GAYS AGAINST GUNS
Join Gays Against Guns as they
visit a gun show near the New
York metro area. The group
attends gun shows to spread
awareness about gun violence
and disseminate information
that people who are purchas-
ing or own firearms might not
already know. The group will be
disembarking from the LGBTQ
Center in Manhattan.
LGBTQ CENTER
208 W 13th St

WED OCT 4

6PM–10PM • FREE
FOOD: SLICE OUT HUNGER'S
\$1 SLICE NIGHT
Slice Out Hunger is a culinary
charitable celebration that's a
win-win for everyone: All slices
of pizza are one dollar and all
profits go straight towards the
charities Sylvia Center and City
Harvest.
**THE SHRINE CHURCH OF SAINT
ANTHONY OF PADUA**
154 Sullivan St.

THU OCT 5

6PM–8PM • FREE
TALK: CRIMINALIZING POV-
ERTY
It's been four years since
courts determined that New
York City's "stop-and-frisk"
policy was unconstitutional,
but communities across the
city continue to be subjected
to "broken windows" policing.
Join the Brooklyn Community
Bail Fund for a discussion of

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THE INDYPENDENT

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER



ZIBI THIKLIN

how community organizations are fighting back against the criminalization of poverty. Panelists Josmar Trujillo with the Coalition to End Broken Windows and Alyssa Aguilera with VOCAL-NY will speak with Brooklyn Law School professor Jocelyn Simonson. Doors open at 6 P.M. Register at eventbrite.com.

BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
128 Pierrepont St.

THU OCT 5

8:45PM–10PM • \$8, 21+
MUSIC: *AUTOMATIC FOR THE PEOPLE*

R.E.M.'s surreal, somber and resonant album *Automatic for the People* turns 25 years old. Musician Chris Blacker and friends will recreate and perform the entire album live.
ARLENE'S GROCERY
95 Stanton St.

FRI OCT 6

8PM • \$45
MUSIC: ESPERANZA SPALDING
The four-time Grammy-winning jazz bassist, singer and musical savant takes the stage in Brooklyn.
PIONEER WORKS
159 Pioneer St.

SAT OCT 7

1PM–4PM • FREE
FILM: *IF ONLY I WERE THAT WARRIOR*
If Only I Were That Warrior, a prize-winning documentary focused on Italy's 1935 occupation of Ethiopia and what people choose to remember and conveniently forget. Director Valerio Ciriaci will be present for a Q & A.
MULBERRY BRANCH PUBLIC LIBRARY
10 Jersey St.

MON OCT 9

6PM–9PM • FREE
EXHIBITION: "BEHIND THESE PRISON WALLS"
Former Rikers Island corrections officer, visual artist and author Lorenzo Steele Jr. takes viewers into the nation's most

violent adolescent jail on Rikers Island. Lorenzo uses photography and a personal testimony that offers a visual journey into the "Bing," Riker's adolescent solitary confinement unit. All images on display were taken between 1987 and 1999, one of the most violent and brutal eras in Rikers Island's history.

THE LIVING GALLERY OUTPOST
246 E 4th St.

TUE OCT 10

6:30PM–9:30PM • FREE
BOOK LAUNCH: *THE END OF POLICING*

Join Alex Vitale for the launch of his new book *The End of Policing* and a conversation with a panel of activists about how the book relates to their organizing work to end police violence. The discussion will be moderated by Sarah Jaffe.
VERSO BOOKS
20 Jay St.

THU OCT 12 THRU SUN OCT 15

VARIOUS • \$13–\$18
FILM: BROOKLYN HORROR FILM FEST
Come celebrate the art of horror filmmaking at a festival focused on cinema that pushes the genre's boundaries and challenges its preconceptions. Visit brooklynhorrorfest.com for tickets and more info on the full lineup of premieres, parties, food, drink, blood and guts.

THU OCT 12

6:30PM–9:30PM • FREE
PODCAST: SEEING RED: ON THE CENTURY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
The Russian Revolution took place 100 years ago this year! Join the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research for a live recording of its podcast. This event will feature a panel of Brooklyn Institute faculty including Asma Abbas, Anthony Alessandrini, Ajay Singh Chaudhary and Rebecca

Ariel Porte, reflecting on the resonance of 1917.

61 LOCAL
61 Bergen St.

THU OCT 12

7:30PM • \$15
PERFORMANCE: NATIVE TONGUE STORY SLAM

Created by award winning storyteller Aman Ali, *Native Tongue: A Story Slam* investigates the theme of home through the viewpoint of multigenerational artists, thinkers and disrupters. *Native Tongue* showcases and celebrates the lives of marginalized voices around the corner and around the globe. Tickets at harlemstage.org.
HARLEM STAGE
150 Convent Ave.

FRI OCT 13

7PM–8:15PM • \$21
LITERATURE: AN EVENING WITH SHERMAN ALEXIE
Join National Book Award for Young People's Literature winner Sherman Alexie to celebrate the 10th anniversary of his iconic young adult novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. Tickets at symphonyspace.org.
SYMPHONY SPACE
2537 Broadway

FRI OCT 13

8PM–4AM • \$18 in advance, \$22 day-of
PARTY: FELABRATION NYC 2017
An all-night tribute to Afrobeat legend Fela Anikulapo Kuti headlined by Low Mentality. Founded in 2011 by multi-instrumentalist and producer Nikhil P. Yerawadekar, Low Mentality merges elements of Afrobeat, reggae, dancehall, hip-hop and rock to create deeply funky compositions. Tickets available at eventbrite.com.
NUBLU 151
151 Avenue C

MON OCT 16

7PM • FREE
PERFORMANCE: BROOK-

LYN POETRY SLAM — JAZZFEST EDITION

Each month, the Brooklyn Poetry Slam brings together the borough's best slam poets for a monthly gathering of words and wisdom. For this special JazzFest edition, guest poets and hosts Mahogany Browne and DJ Jive Poetic highlight the criss-crossing influences and beats of jazz, poetry and hip-hop. Open mic to follow.

BRIC
647 Fulton St.

THU OCT. 19

7PM–11PM • \$35, 21+
PARTY: GENDER BASH
Come support Third Wave, a nonprofit that provides young women, transgender and gender-nonconforming youth with the skills, power and opportunity to engage in and lead efforts for social justice. Gender Bash features a dance party fueled by DJ Bearcat (Discwoman) and DJ Precolumbian.
LITTLEFIELD
635 Sackett St.

FRI OCT 20

7 PM–10 PM • \$25
MUSIC: THE PROTEST SONGS OF ANI CORDERO
Puerto Rican-born singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Ani Cordero is a soulful vocalist inspired by Latin America's Nueva Canción movement, as well as pan-Latin folk and indie rock.
ELEBASH RECITAL HALL
365 5th Ave.



JOSE NIETO



COURTESY OF BROOKLYN HORROR FEST/MELANCHOLY STAR

THE RHYTHM NEVER

DIES: Nikhil P.'s Low Mentality headline a funk-infused tribute to the late great Fela Kuti at Nublu 151 on the Lower East Side, Oct. 13.

LIFT OFF:

She may play bass but she's taking jazz to new heights. Catch Esperanza Spalding at Pioneer Works in Brooklyn on Oct. 6.

BLOOD PRESSURE:

Set your heart pounding at the Brooklyn Horror Fest this October. The Book of Birdie, which features an all-female cast performing in some truly bloody scenes, is making its North American premiere on Oct. 15.

THE LIFE & DEATH OF A NEWSPAPER

AFTER 62 YEARS IN PRINT, AMERICA'S PREEMINENT ALTERNATIVE WEEKLY IS ENDING ITS PRINT EDITION

BY STEVEN WISHNIA

When I got out of journalism school in the late 1980s, working at the *Village Voice* would have been my dream job.

The *Voice*, founded in 1955, defined the format for the “alternative weeklies” that would appear in most of the country’s major cities over the next 50 years, from the *Boston Phoenix* to the *L.A. Weekly*: A mix of news, investigative, and arts coverage with local entertainment listings, left of the mainstream both politically and culturally. They weren’t as militantly radical or hippified as the “underground” papers that proliferated in the late ’60s, but their writing and editing was much more professional. Few of the undergrounds survived past 1972. (*The Independent* has lasted 17 years.)

As a weekly paper in the pre-Internet era, it could do stories more in-depth than a daily newspaper and more timely than a monthly. The *Voice* tracked how South Bronx landlords sold buildings to shell companies to pump up their value before torching them for insurance money. Jack Newfield and Paul DuBrul dissected the “permanent government” of finance and real-estate interests that came to dominate the city after the 1975-76 fiscal crisis, and Newfield and Wayne Barrett chronicled the corruption of Edward Koch’s administration. Barrett’s 1979 piece on a certain loudmouthed real-estate scion wangling government subsidies to build hotels and towers in Manhattan, despite his family business’s history of discriminating against black apartment-seekers, was particularly prescient.

The *Voice* gave writers like Jill Nelson, Greg Tate, and Nelson George the freedom and resources to write in their own styles and do long, in-depth stories, earning it the reputation of a “writers’ paper.” When four teenagers in a New Jersey suburb committed suicide in 1987, writer Donna Gaines spent weeks hanging out with the town’s “burn-outs” for a piece titled “Teenage Wasteland.” On the lighter side, there was Michael Musto’s gossip column, with its blind-item specials like “What ostensibly straight Broadway producer...?”

Equally important, it was rigorously edited. One writer praised music editor Robert Christgau as “someone who has never let me get away with a lazy thought.”

The *Voice*’s arts editors were all deeply steeped in the scenes they covered — film, theater, dance, music, art, books. In contrast to today, when performers seeking an audience either have to keep dragging their friends out or spend hours promoting themselves online, a mention in the *Voice* would mean lots of strangers knew who you were. Off-off-Broadway theatre and the late-’70s Lower

Manhattan music scene would not have developed the cultural legs they did without the exposure they got in the *Voice*.

This cut both ways. People who didn’t get covered often resented arts-section editors for excluding them; Sonic Youth once recorded a song joking about killing Robert Christgau. The post-modernism fad of the ’80s meant a lot of insufferably pretentious and incomprehensible prose made it in, like a music piece that talked more about Jacques Derrida than the band at CBGB it was reviewing.

There were several reasons for the *Voice*’s decline. The archetypal readers it imagined — bohemian and educated enough to go to foreign films or catch Cecil Taylor at the Knitting Factory or Patti Smith at the St. Marks Poetry Project, and who also cared about politics and could afford to buy unfinished bookcases and platform beds — gradually disappeared as Manhattan gentrified.

Competition from the *New York Press* forced it to go free in the early ’90s, cutting off its newsstand revenue. The *Press* at first gave an outlet to good writers who couldn’t find room at the *Voice*, but by 1994 or so, it had adopted a pre-Internet form of flame bait as its business model: Publish

New owner Peter Barbey, who acquired the paper in 2015, tried to rejuvenate it, beefing up news coverage and bringing back book reviews, but eventually decided that print was not sustainable. The decision to go web-only was preceded by the layoff of almost all the remaining union staff.

I got a chip of my dream job when I got a feature published in 1994, breaking the story that the city planned to evict five squats on East 13th Street and give them to a housing-development nonprofit formerly run by the Lower East Side’s Giuliani-Democrat City Councilmember. (It was a little incestuous: The squatters I interviewed for it were mostly friends from the neighborhood.) My editor, Andrew Hsiao, spent four hours going over the story with me line by line, and I got paid more than a month’s rent for an 1,800-word article. That seems like an unimaginable luxury in today’s media world.

It didn’t last: I did several more articles for them over the next year or so, but then both of the editors I was working with left, a perennial peril in the life of a freelancer. I didn’t get back in until last

TURNING A PAGE: The *Village Voice* published its last print edition on Sept. 20.

PUBLISHING ON THE WEB IS MUCH EASIER & CHEAPER THAN PRINT. BUT SOMETHING IS IRREVOCABLY LOST FOR THAT CHEAPNESS & INSTANTANEOUSNESS

something obnoxious, like their rock critic saying he didn’t give a shit about rich rock star Kurt Cobain killing himself, and get enough articulate angry letters to fill eight pages without having to pay writers. The *Press*’s political writers often came off like minor-league right-wingers trying to snark their way onto the *New York Post*’s op-ed page, but between gentrification and the number of people who didn’t want to pay a dollar to get the club listings, it ate into the *Voice*’s circulation.

The internet and concentration of ownership decimated alternative weeklies. Classified ads moved online, from apartments (the most avid and savvy apartment-seekers would grab the *Voice* the minute it came off the first truck at the newsstand in Cooper Square on Tuesday night) to personals to musicians (“Health Hen seeks drummer. Rude, obsessive, with a feel for tribal meters”). The paper got thinner and thinner, with the phone-sex ads in the back filling more pages than the news and cultural coverage. When the Phoenix-based *New Times* chain took over the *Voice* in 2005, the paper dumped many of its remaining staff — and advertised for a film writer who preferred Hollywood blockbusters to foreign art movies. The layoff of Wayne Barrett in 2011 may have been its nadir.

year. Now I have the historical footnote of being one of the writers in Sept. 20’s final print edition, with stories on the history of landlords harassing tenants as a business model and on local Virgin Islanders and Antiguan-Barbudans organizing hurricane-relief efforts.

The *Voice* follows the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* to online-only publishing. The *Boston Phoenix* folded in 2013, and the Philadelphia *City Paper* in 2015. The *L.A. Weekly* and the *Chicago Reader* have survived, but suffered severe layoffs. The few alternative weeklies still going strong include the *Austin Chronicle*, the *St. Louis Riverfront Times* and the *Seattle Stranger*.

Publishing on the web is much easier and cheaper than print. All you have to do is upload content to a server, and there are no worries about space. You don’t have to worry about how to fit and fill and lay out a designated number of pages, print and collate thousands of copies, and truck them to distribution points — all long after similar material is available online.

But something is irrevocably lost for that cheapness and instantaneousness. People’s attention spans, and arguably the way their brains process

Continued on page 6



THOMAS HAWK

FAKE NEWS FACTORIES

WITH TRUMP'S HELP, RIGHT-WING MEDIA
GOES MAINSTREAM

BY BIANCA FORTIS

Though conservative media has existed for decades, the presidency of Donald Trump has allowed for the proliferation of the right-wing media into the mainstream. That Trump considers any news that doesn't suit his needs to be "fake" has helped right-wing media, typically cast to the edges of the political periphery, thrive in the current climate.

There are three notable ways in which the media landscape has morphed since Trump first announced his campaign, according to Angelo Carusone, the president of the watchdog group Media Matters.

First, what Carusone calls the "leapfrog phenomenon": Trump's ability to amplify fringe voices and inject misinformation into the public discourse simply by retweeting something or making offhand comments, thus leaping over the traditional channels through which conspiracy theories typically spread.

Second, fragmentation: During the presidential campaign, hardcore conservative websites suddenly found themselves vying for Trump's attention and arguing among themselves. That led to them splintering off from one another, demonstrating tribal behavior. Fragmentation inevitably leads to extremism, because websites can only keep their smaller audiences engaged by becoming more extreme, Carusone said.

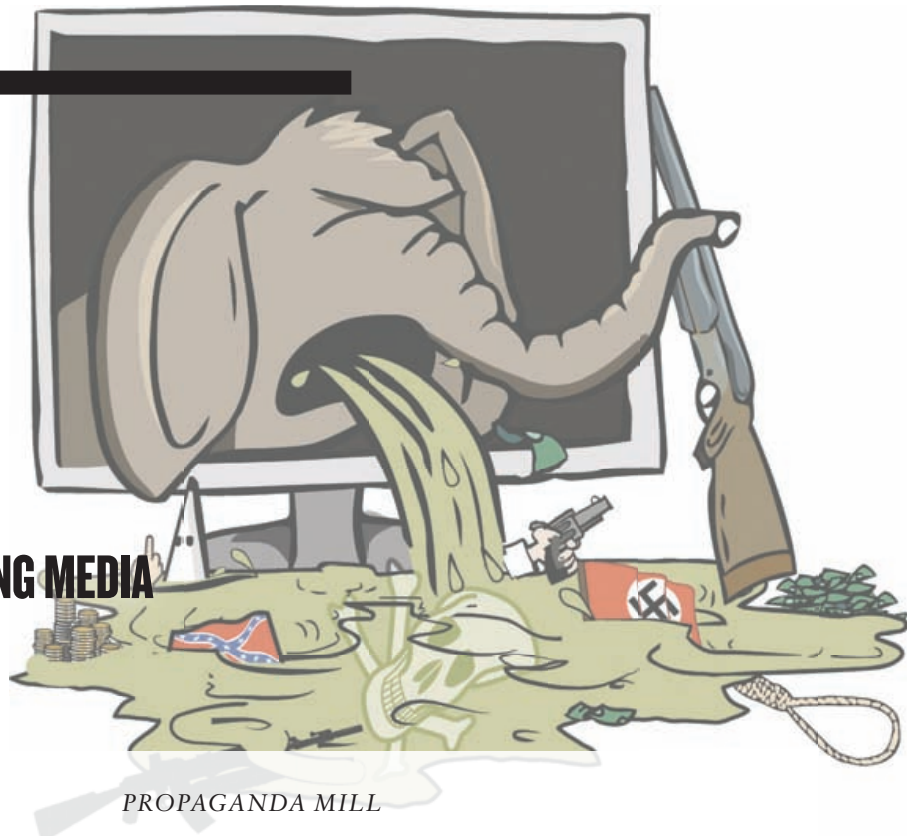
And finally, there's fake news. Right-wing message boards serve as factories for conspiracy theories, which are then written up as news by fake news websites that are typically only after clicks and are designed to mislead readers into thinking they are real. Those stories are then posted to Facebook and other social media platforms where they saturate the internet with lies.

"It's not that the media itself changed, but their relationship to misinformation has changed," Carusone said. "There are a lot of lies injected into the daily news cycle."

It's clear that Trump favors Fox News as his source for information, often tweeting about the network's ratings and encouraging his followers to watch segments from the network's morning show "Fox and Friends." There is evidence that the show influences his agenda: In July "Fox and Friends" incorrectly reported that James Comey had leaked information about meeting with Trump, a claim which Trump repeated on Twitter. Though the show's hosts issued a correction the following day, the president did not. Prior to his campaign, Trump was a frequent guest on the network, and now that he is president he has used Fox as a talent pipeline to fill roles in his administration — further cementing the relationship between the cable network and the White House.

Breitbart, a website known for publishing conspiracy theories alongside articles with extraordinarily offensive headlines, led a relatively quiet existence in the conservative underground until 2016, when the site and its former executive chairman, Steve Bannon, helped facilitate Trump's political ascent, thereby launching it into America's mainstream consciousness. Bannon hailed *Breitbart* as the "platform for the alt-right." During his seven months as Trump's chief strategist, Bannon was able to permeate national politics from within the walls of the White House. Since his departure from the Trump administration, Bannon has retreated back to *Breitbart*, reportedly declaring, "I've got my hands back on my weapons."

And then there's Sinclair Broadcasting.



Since its humble beginnings as the Chesapeake Television Corporation in 1971, the Maryland-based company has evolved into a media giant, now owning 173 stations in 81 markets. It continues to buy stations throughout the country, firmly rooting itself into the American media landscape.

Sinclair is known for its "must-runs," pieces of conservative political commentary that it requires all of its stations to air. The company made headlines in 2004 when it required all of its stations to air *Stolen Honor*, a documentary film critical of John Kerry, two weeks before the presidential election. Now Sinclair stations are broadcasting must-run segments from Boris Epshteyn, whose last job was in Trump's press office. In a recent "Bottom Line With Boris," Epshteyn echoes Trump's debunked claim that the United States has the highest corporate tax rate in the world. "Our elected officials should not approach lowering of the corporate tax rate with a defeatist mentality," he says. "They need to get to as low of a rate as possible to see the most return for American businesses and the American people."

Last year, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner revealed that the Trump campaign had arranged for some of Sinclair's local stations to receive special access to Trump during the campaign in exchange for puff pieces about him. Sinclair required those interviews to be broadcast around the country.

Sinclair is now attempting to buy the Tribune Company for \$3.9 billion, which would give Sinclair control of local television stations in markets that reach 72 percent of U.S. television viewers. The federal cap is 39 percent. However, Sinclair has appealed directly to Ajit Pai, the Trump appointed chair of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), who has taken steps to revive a loophole that relaxes that limit.

Karl Frisch, executive director of the consumer watchdog group Allied Progress, said that regardless of Sinclair's partisanship, it's unwise to allow one company to achieve such a large presence in the local TV news landscape. "It's bad for competition, it's bad for media diversity and it's bad for consumers," he told *The Independent*, pointing out that prices for cable and satellite programming could increase.

Trust in the media is at an all-time low, but a recent poll by the Pew Research Center shows that media consumers are most likely to trust local news. Another Pew Research poll shows that a majority of adults still use TV as their main source of news. But because Sinclair owns local affiliates of the major TV networks, viewers don't necessarily know they're watching a Sinclair-owned station.

Frisch encourages the public to contact the FCC and members of Congress, who can still stop the merger. The FCC has received more than 16 million public comments mostly opposed to rescinding net neutrality and has pressed Sinclair to provide more details about its plans, which leads Frisch to think the merger could be stalled until next year, according to multichannel.com.

Continued on next page

Law and Disorder radio

WBAI 99.5 FM

Mondays at 9am

DOWNLOAD PODCASTS at lawanddisorder.org

“Our basic constitutional rights are in jeopardy. “Law and Disorder” is an excellent magazine format radio show, hosted by progressive lawyers who analyze the state of civil rights in this post-9/11 period. From attacks on Muslims at home to torture abroad, “Law and Disorder” puts these constitutional attacks into perspective.”

—AMY GOODMAN, HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!

Co-founded by Michael Ratner (1943-2016) President, Center for Constitutional Rights; and hosted by movement lawyers Heidi Boghosian, Executive Director, A. J. Muste Memorial Institute; and Michael Steven Smith, New York City attorney and author.

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MON SEP 25 • 7-9:30PM
TALK: Death Cafe — a place to discuss death comfortably in a free-wheeling, self-facilitated conversation that will inevitably touch upon life and living.

SUN OCT 1 • 2:30-3:30PM
LIT: Inclusive of gender, political persuasion and familiarity, the Feminist Book Club reads and discusses feminist literature. *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi is this month's book.

TUE OCT 10 • 7-9:30PM
BOOK LAUNCH: *Extreme Cities: The Peril and Promise of Urban Life in the Age of Climate Change* by Ashley Dawson examines urbanization and global warming through the lens of Hurricane Sandy.

RESIST!
ZAPATISTA STORE

HISTORY STATES



YOU STILL HAVE A VOICE

BY JOHN TARLETON

As the *Village Voice* ends its remarkable run as a print publication, it's easy to forget how tenuous its early existence was.

Launched from a Greenwich Village apartment in 1955 with \$10,000 in seed money from Norman Mailer, the early *Voice* teetered on the brink of financial ruin throughout its first seven years. It eventually found its footing at the intersection of the cultural, sexual and political upheavals of the 1960s and grew into a behemoth that spawned a whole new genre of "alt-weekly" publications. Its original editors eventually tired of the grind and unloaded the paper for \$3 million in 1974, the first of many times the *Voice* would be bought and sold.

The Independent recently marked its 17th anniversary. Our early years if anything were more precarious. We started the paper with a \$500 foundation grant to cover the printing costs of our first two black-and-white four-page issues. We were also given free office space by a supporter, which several of us moved into because we had nowhere else to live. From there, the paper was on its own and we had to learn on the fly how to survive and thrive. Unlike the liberal *Voice*, which eyed the left

warily, we embraced it and filled a void in the New York media landscape.

The radical journalists, activists and dreamers who were drawn to *The Indy* came out of various strands of the left. We generally shared a belief in the proven ability of visionary social movements to change the world for the better while harboring no illusions about the left's shortcomings and pretensions.

If we had realized at the time how difficult it is to publish a high quality leftwing newspaper on a shoe-string budget year after year, we might not have tried. But we persisted. And here we are, all these years later, still publishing while much of the newspaper industry has crashed and burned around us.

But while our continued survival has been something of a miracle, merely surviving isn't enough. Since Donald Trump's rise to power last fall, we have responded by placing outdoor news boxes across the city and have more than doubled our circulation to 34,000 papers per month and growing.

Embracing a multi-media world we could have scarcely imagined 17 years ago, we are also publishing more original online content than ever before on our new website while producing podcasts, short videos and an e-newsletter as well.

The Indy is a paper of our times and its rapid growth is in keeping with a resurgent interest we've seen in recent years in left ideas and politics. We're still operating on a lean budget in which we make every dollar go as far as we can. The only way we can sustain this growth is with the support of more of our readers.

To that end, you can sign up to become a monthly donor at patreon.com/indypendent. Giving through Patreon is quick and easy and in return we have many gifts on our Patreon page to share with you as tokens of our appreciation.

The Voice's hulking red plastic boxes will soon fall empty, a reminder that a free press isn't free even if the newspaper is. At the youthful age of 17, we believe our best work lies ahead of us and we will be able to reach increasingly larger numbers of people with it. Thank you for everything you do to make that possible.

John Tarleton is the editor-in-chief and a co-founder of The Independent.

VILLAGE VOICE

Continued from page 4

information, are different on a screen, snipping quick bits off the chyron instead of slowing down to concentrate on a long-form story with nuance and detail. The lack of revenue and demand for immediacy online mean writers usually don't make enough money to research in-depth

stories, and they are often posted with minimal editing. For all the "you can be the media" rhetoric and complaints about "gatekeepers," there's value in an article that's been knowledgeably reported, written well, and professionally edited and fact-checked.

More important socially, print provides a common, public point of reference. Like it or not, agree or disagree, you see the headlines on the subway, and people you

know and many you don't know will be talking about it, far more than in the morass of myriad niche markets and insular subcultures on the web. The difference is akin to that between the specialization of a website for gay men who like Asian bears, and the catholicity of a small-city queer bar that draws in both gay men, lesbians and the artier local heteros.

That's what the *Village Voice* was to New York City for decades. It will contin-

ue to publish online, and I hope it succeeds — not least because I hope to continue writing for it regularly — but its end as a printed newspaper is a tragedy for the city.

FAKE NEWS

Continued from previous page

NET NEUTRALITY IN PERIL

Advocates are also concerned that the FCC will roll back net neutrality, the "1st Amendment of the internet" that prevents large telecommunications companies from controlling online content and requires that all traffic be treated equally. If this were to happen, the nation's largest internet service providers — Verizon, Comcast, AT&T — would be able to block and censor websites and charge extra fees for faster service, leaving smaller sites at a competitive disadvantage.

Asked about solutions to the right-wing media takeover, Media Matters' Angelo Carusone encourages people to speak up within their own social circles and online networks.

"Of course you don't need to become a hall monitor for the internet," he said. "But being silent against active misinformation and lies creates a clear landing strip for lies to be promoted."

It's also necessary, of course, to support independent media, which typically lacks the deep coffers that benefit right-wing and corporate-owned outlets. Progressive alternatives including the daily television and radio news show *Democracy Now!*, Manhattan Neighborhood Network and Brooklyn's BRIC TV, WBAI-99.5 FM and podcasts like "Chapo Trap House" and "Street Fight" are a boon

to voices and opinions that have been historically excluded from the mainstream. And there are still newspapers like *The Independent*, determined to persist.

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CONCON PROS & CONS

NEW YORK STATE VOTERS TO DECIDE THE RISKS OF CALLING A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION THIS NOVEMBER

BY PETER RUGH

On Nov. 7 voters in New York State will have an opportunity to gamble. Every two decades the option to call a statewide constitutional convention, or ConCon, appears on ballots. It is a chance to enshrine into law new progressive provisions lawmakers are unwilling or unable to enact — campaign finance reforms, term limits on the state legislature and enhanced worker rights and environmental protections.

Lawmakers in Albany can enact constitutional changes that are subject to voter approval, but a ConCon is “the only mechanism in New York that bypasses the legislature’s gatekeeping power,” said J.H. Snider, who runs the New York State Constitutional Convention Clearinghouse. He sees this year’s vote on a potential ConCon as a much-needed opportunity to clean up the state’s foundational text.

“The constitution needs to be modernized,” Snider said of the 43-page document. “It’s a cesspool. Nobody reads it. It’s way too long. It’s full of obsolete laws.” The ConCon “provides a unique democratic function in New York. People may decide they want to exercise that right or not, but they should understand that right.”

If voters give the ConCon the go-ahead this November, the following year they will have the ability to elect delegates, three for each of New York’s 63 Senate districts and 15 statewide. On April 2, 2019 the ConCon would convene in Albany. Any changes to the existing constitution, which dates back to 1894 and was last altered in 1938, will be up to voters to ratify. Delegates can either elect to submit their constitutional alterations on ballots as an entirely new constitution or as a series of amendments to be approved or struck down individually.

“We know that our democracy is broken here in New York,” said Dick Dadey of the government watchdog Citizen Union, which supports the ConCon. “Corruption is rampant. Voter turnout is low. Money is determining the outcome of too many of our political battles, be they legislative fights or elections. The machinery of our democracy is so old, it’s rusted out. We need to bring it into the 21st century with a new constitution that will value every New Yorker and engage every voice.”

Early voting, statewide public financing of elections, term limits on members of the State Assembly and Senate and caps on campaign donations are among the reforms Citizens Union wants the ConCon to institute. Some environmental groups, pointing to the Flint-like water crisis in Hoosick Falls, New York, would like to see the right to clean water and, hell, why not, clean air, written into the constitution as well.

But ConCons are a risky proposition.

Opponents of the ConCon — and they are numerous and varied — warn Albany’s swampy culture of corruption could subsume attempts at reform and the convention could have quite the opposite outcome its advocates intend. The very systemic prob-

lems that ConCon supporters want to alter could corrupt the ConCon process itself. There is no limit on campaign expenditures on ballot measures or on donations to political action committees in New York, for instance, and contributions made 19 days before elections are exempt from disclosure until after tallies are complete.

“The money that is going to be wired into the process from large financial institutions is going to be quite extraordinary,” said Mike Fabricant, vice president of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), a union that represents 27,000 faculty and staff at the City University of New York. “We do not, at this moment, have the power to push back against that kind of money.”

There are also a lot of known unknowns surrounding the ConCon, including what statutes the legislature will enact on the delegate selection process. Will potential delegates’ party affiliation appear beside their names on the ballot, as it has in the past? Will parties run slates for the 15 statewide delegate slots or will voters have the opportunity to vote for candidates individually. Ironically, elected officials are eligible to run and even receive parallel salaries, which could nullify the ConCon’s chances of bypassing the legislature.

Long, Chairman of the Conservative Party. “We have a pretty good constitution. It has nothing to do with the corruption that goes on in our state. You can have all the constitutional conventions in the world and pass all the laws that you want to make tougher penalties, but there will always be people who fall into the corrupt path of life. Corruption alone is not an excuse to open a can of worms and throw the baby out with the bath water.”

One might think of the effort to put the kibosh on the ConCon as a kind of stand-off between different interest groups. Each wants to protect the niche they have carved out within New York’s political ecosystem and each is fearful a ConCon will present an opening for new or existing rivals to exploit.

“The people who are against this are the people who have a great deal of power right now and are essentially protecting the status quo,” said Dick Dadey of Citizens Union. “People who protect the status quo have a lot to lose if this convention is convened and the power structure is realigned.”

Many of the groups opposing the ConCon today were once some of its greatest advocates and have gained the most from past conventions. In 1894, amid the burgeoning conservation movement, a “forever wild” provision was added to the consti-

SUPPORTERS OF A CONCON SEE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO REFORM A BROKEN STATE GOVERNMENT WHILE OPPONENTS WARN ALBANY’S SWAMPY CULTURE OF CORRUPTION COULD SUBSUME ATTEMPTS AT REFORM.

“Con, con, con: the ConCon is a con,” said Donna Lieberman of the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU).

Lieberman raises another issue with the process that undermines the likelihood the convention will represent the will of the people: delegates will be elected from Senate districts carved out to benefit Republicans who narrowly control the State Senate in an otherwise solidly liberal state. “We don’t object inherently to the notion of using State Senate districts [to determine delegates], but the districts have been gerrymandered in such a way as to frustrate any illusion of this being a convention determined on the basis of one person, one vote,” Lieberman said.

Fearing the worst, cats and dogs are working together to dissuade the electorate from rolling the dice. Along with NYCLU, the Working Families Party has teamed up with the Conservative Party, Planned Parenthood with anti-choice groups. LGBT rights advocates, unions and environmental organizations have joined forces with the likes of the State Rifle and Pistol Association. Together they’ve formed a broad coalition calling itself New Yorkers Against Corruption.

“We’re aligned with groups we don’t traditionally agree with and they certainly don’t agree with us, but I think we’re on the right track,” said Mike

tution that shields the Adirondacks and Catskills from development. The 1938 convention added amendments safeguarding the right to collectively bargain, protected pensions for state employees and placed the onus on the state to provide for those in need — a law later interpreted as a right to shelter for the homeless.

During the 1938 convention, “people responded to the material circumstances of their lives,” said PSC’s Mike Fabricant. “They were in a depression. Many were not close to starvation; they were starving. ... Movements emerged out of the drop in the market and those movements carried forward a reform agenda. We don’t have those movements presently.”

Fabricant is not unique among labor leaders, particularly those who represent state employees, in urging for what he calls as a “tactical retreat” from the ConCon. Much to the ire of budget hawks in Albany, New York is essentially forbidden from defaulting on its pension obligations thanks to the 1938 convention. Given the legislature’s willingness to chip away at retirement funds — over the past 40 years they’ve gradually established a six-tier system in which new hires on the bottom rung receive a fraction of what their older counterparts cash out with — pensions are not a subject public employee unions want to open up for debate.

“Many on Wall Street and off see pensions as a





GINO BARZIZZA

weight on their purse and those folks will fill, or their money will fill, the convention,” said Fabricant.

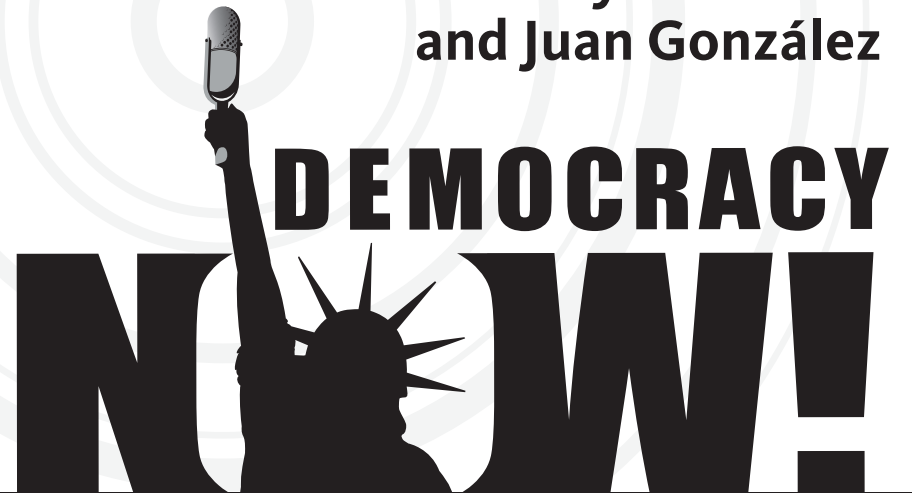
ConCon proponents accuse those pushing against the convention of exaggerating the risk the ConCon poses.

While public employee retirement benefits and the forever clause “are technically at risk when you open up the constitution, no one has been able to show me there’s an organized threat to take away pensions or open up the Adirondacks to development,” said Dadey. “There’s no constituency for that.”

Money, however, is a constituency of its own. Wealthy special interests could make up for their lack of public support with their dollar bills. If the ConCon is approved, it will likely set up a battle — which some worry could prove near-apocalyptic in nature — between the political forces of reform and reaction.

According to a poll from Siena College released this September, 45 percent of registered voters in New York State favor holding a ConCon, 33 percent are opposed and 22 percent are undecided.

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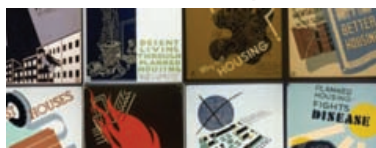
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IMMIGRATION

THESE DREAMS WON'T BE DEFERRED

**AS DACA RECIPIENTS MOBILIZE AGAINST
DEPORTATION, HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO**

BY ASTHA RAJVANSHI

As Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the White House's plan to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program on the morning of Sept. 5, the attorneys at the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights (NMCIR) gathered around to talk about what to do next.

Many of their clients made up some of the 800,000 Dreamers who had arrived in the United States as children and found legal means to stay in the country through the Obama-era executive action also known as DACA.

After the program was introduced in 2012, NMCIR worked to get over 400 people DACA status, and their clients had returned every two years to renew it. “They were a part of our family,” says Angela Fernandez, the executive director of NMCIR.

By noon, NMCIR had called each and every one of them to tell them the news and talk them through the next steps. The recipients were told to check the expiration date on their status — if it expired on, or before, March 8 of next year, they had to come into the office urgently to fill out their paperwork by Oct. 4, the expiration for renewal set by the Department of Justice.

“The most insidious part of it was that a lot of people are not aware of what can happen to them,” Fernandez said. “800,000 people go out of status from one day to the next. It's the cruelty of it; the complete disregard for the fact that these people are human.”

The announcement to end DACA has caused a huge stir across the United States, with thousands of affected families and friends rallying support for the Dreamers. Many community and legal organizations like NMCIR, major businesses, religious leaders, Democrats, and even some Republicans are now appealing to Congress, which has been tasked by the Trump administration to legalize DACA or find alternatives within a six-month grace period.

Fernandez told *The Independent* that getting a protection bill for Dreamers approved in Congress would involve a range of tactics — many of which are already being implemented on the local level. For example, on the day that Sessions announced the repeal, 34 DACA recipients got arrested in front of Trump Tower, there was a hunger strike in Washington, D.C. and many marched out of schools, jobs and homes to protest on the streets.

“All of this elevates the issue and shows that people are willing to make a sacrifice for it with their bodies,” said Fernandez.

But on a strategic level, Fernandez said it was crucial to do an analysis of how many votes were in support of the bill from both the Republicans and the Democrats. “Then, we can inundate the office of the reps who are in-between, or do sit-ins in their offices, or find out when

their district visits and town hall meetings are held to ask them, ‘Are you going to support the bill?’,” Fernandez said. “If they don't support it, we need to call them out on it.”

While it was encouraging to see that Democratic leaders Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi were working towards a deal with President Trump to extend protections for those under DACA, Fernandez believes that only a combination of advocacy efforts and public awareness will force the hand of Congress.

“My main concern is publicly we're going to see a lot of political jujitsu,” she said. “Trump is the master of smoke in mirrors. It's important to get enough votes from those in-between by tipping them over the line.”

Fernandez also called on the wider community to show support. If an ally is willing to donate money, for example, they should write a check to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and mail it to their local community organization representing Dreamers.

“How many young people and DACA recipients would

HERE TO STAY:

Demonstrators took to the streets in New York City and around the country on Sept. 5 to decry President Trump's decision to end DACA.

**“A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE NOT
AWARE OF WHAT CAN HAPPEN
TO THEM.”**

have a spare \$500 to petition USCIS to extend their status?” she said.

Other ways of showing support included rallying relatives who live in districts where members of Congress need pressure put on them to vote in favor of DACA. Fernandez suggested getting together as a community to do constituency calling, and raising awareness about the issue.

And finally, she said, “just be kind and loving to your undocumented neighbors.”



HARRIE VAN VEEN

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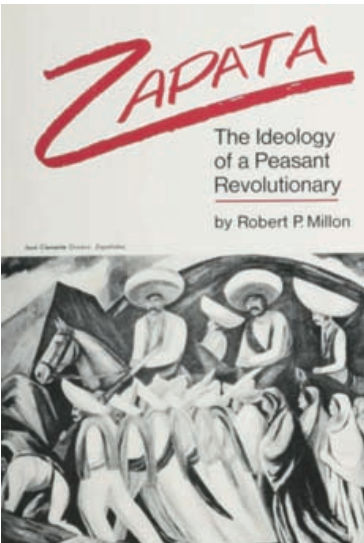
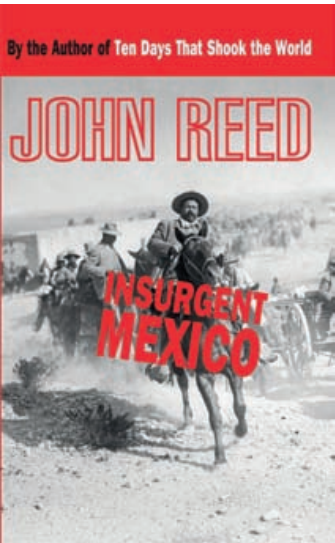


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WALT WHITMAN

The author of *Leaves of Grass* is now wandering in the woods upstate. A walking, full-size bronze figure of Walt Whitman in Bear Mountain State Park, New York, celebrates the legacy of his poetry. Unveiled in 1940, the monument by Jo Davidson is located only a few miles outside the city. The park, which hosts a museum dedicated to the Appalachian Trail and a zoological garden, provides a perfect scenery to the author's effigy. Carved on an adjacent stone, lines from Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* honor the literary accomplishments of this native New Yorker.

HARRIET TUBMAN

The Harriet Tubman Memorial is a portrait sculpture of the Underground Railroad's heroine and a landmark of Harlem's community. This dignified work by Alison Saar stands at the intersection of Frederick Douglass Boulevard, West 122nd Street and St. Nicholas Avenue. Unveiled in 2008, the larger-than-life bronze sculpture bears witness to Tubman's accomplishments as a freedom fighter: Born into slavery in 1822, she rescued approximately 70 enslaved people and led them to the North. The position of the two-ton monument, facing south, honors the frequent trips that Tubman, risking her own freedom and life, made to save fugitives from slavery.

FREDERICK DOUGLAS

Overlooking the boulevard that carries his name, the Frederick Douglas memorial is a monumental complex designed by Gabriel Koren and inaugurated in 2011. The heroic-scale bronze figure honors the memory of this abolitionist leader and intellectual who fled slavery as a young man and settled in the North, where he became one of the most influential African Americans of the 19th century. Located at the northwest corner of Central Park, the monument is accompanied by his writings carved on granite blocks designed by artist Algernon Miller.

"THE RIGHTS OF MAN AND THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN" one of them reads, "ARE ONE AND INSEPARABLE, AND STAND UPON THE SAME INDESTRUCTIBLE BASIS."

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

In many respects, Eleanor Roosevelt lived as momentous a life as her husband Franklin Roosevelt. She redefined the role of women in an era when the ceiling wasn't glass but solid as the timber over the American domestic nest. Fiercely independent, Roosevelt was a vocal champion of rights for workers, women and minoritized populations. Located inside Riverside Park at West 72nd St. and Riverside Drive, in Penelope Jencks' depiction of her she leans in thoughtful repose — a tribute to a woman whose boundless energy was matched by a fervent intellectual prowess.

JOSÉ MARTÍ

The apostle of Cuban Independence has had his memorial on Central Park South since 1945. José Martí's monument, designed by sculptor Anna Vaughn Hyatt Huntington, is a bronze equestrian statue dedicated to the Cuban revolutionary who fought for the island's independence from Spain. In the 1950s, the Cuban government donated the statue's granite pedestal, but the monument's unveiling had to be delayed until 1965, due to the tense political divide between pro- and anti-Castro New Yorkers.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

While Confederate monuments are unwelcome symbols of white supremacy, there is comfort in knowing General Lee and his buddies got their asses whupped. Meanwhile, quietly standing vigil where two busy paths intersect on the north end of Union Square is a statue of the man who guided the North to a crushing victory over the Confederacy and formally ended 246 years of legalized slavery in this country. A similar Lincoln statue, also produced by Henry Kirke Brown, stands watch over the Prospect Park Concert Grove.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Described by Bruce Kayton, author of *Radical Walking Tours of New York City*, as "one of the few statues in New York City devoted to someone who hasn't murdered anyone," Mahatma Gandhi's monument has stood in Union Square Park since 1986. Installed as part of a \$3.6 million program that turned Union Square into a more upscale area, the statue of the champion of nonviolence seems to lead a silent resistance of sorts. Presiding near the Hare Krishnas' gatherings in the southwest corner of the square, the statue's bronze torso is often seen adorned by floral crowns on spring days.

VLADIMIR LENIN

A heroic-sized statue of Vladimir Lenin was kept installed atop the Red Square luxury condo building on East Houston Street for 20 years by the building's owner. When the complex was sold for \$100 million in 2016, neither the dizzying figures of the sale nor the legacy of McCarthyism managed to expel the Communist leader's memorial from the city: Lenin has found a new home in the Lower East Side, where a crane lifted the bronze statue to the rooftop of 178 Norfolk Street.

LIN ZEXU

South of Canal Street, monuments of Confucius and Lin Zexu voice the various identities of Chinatown.

The first statue, standing in the middle of Confucius Plaza since 1976, was donated by Taiwan's Republic of China. The 15-foot bronze depiction of the tradition-minded Chinese philosopher, sculpted by Liu Shih, was presented by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association to commemorate the U.S. bicentennial.

On the other side of this stretch of Bowers stands a very different figure from the one of China's old sage: Lin Zexu. The Qing Dynasty official helped to ignite the Opium War in 1839 by seizing British opium imports. This anti-imperialist symbol, born in the Fujian Province, embodies the ascending influence in Chinatown of immigrants from mainland China. Significantly, the legacy of this cultural divide between backers of mainland China and Taiwan is still visible today.



IF WE FAIL

HURRICANES HARVEY AND IRMA OFFERED A GLIMPSE OF WHAT LIES AHEAD IN THE 2020S & 2030S IF WE FAIL TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

BY CHRISTIAN PARENTI

The climate crisis is often imagined as a sudden, all-encompassing, simultaneous collapse in which agriculture fails, the seas flood in, disease spreads and human civilization crumbles into Hobbesian war of all against all. But in reality, some crises will appear more immediately and others will take a long time to arrive, and if we act with speed and purpose some can still be avoided.

In the near term, perhaps starting in the 2020s or 2030s, the foremost problem will probably be a new climate-driven urban crisis of disinvestment, abandonment and depopulation caused by rising sea levels and large inundating storms that will leave rotting urban infrastructure. As the water rises and the floods increase in severity and regularity, the once posh shoreline will be the new ghetto.

A new, climate-driven urban crisis could have major negative impacts on other parts of the global economy. The collapse of coastal real estate markets could trigger broader crises in financial markets while loss of the communication and transportation links provided by major cities could hurt the real economy. A climate-driven economic depression is not out of the question.

HERE COMES THE OCEAN

Even if we drastically cut greenhouse gas emissions and stripped CO₂ from the atmosphere so as to stabilize temperature increases at no more than 2°C above the 1990 baseline, we are locked in for significantly higher sea levels. Melting Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets, mountain glacier loss and the expansion of ocean water volume due to its higher temperature are driving the sea level rise.

On the east coast of the United States, the ocean is rising three to four times faster than the global averages, which are themselves rising at an accelerating rate. In 1993 the annual rate of sea level rise was 2.2 millimeters a year; in 2014 it had reached 3.3 millimeters a year. By 2100, global average sea levels could be 2 meters to 2.7 meters — that's 6 to almost 9 feet — higher. Since 1900, sea levels on the East Coast have risen by about a foot, according to the federally funded National Climate Assessment.

This is usually invoked in threats that entire cities will be “underwater.” But in the meantime, the rising oceans are slowly but steadily reshaping property values, urban landscapes and city dynamics.

STORMS VS. URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE

The real threat is not so much the slow and steady increase of average sea levels but rather, the major inundations caused by large storm surges. These floods damage the infrastructure as a whole, not just its edges. During Hurricane Sandy the storm surge that hit Lower Manhattan was 9.23 feet higher than a typical high tide.

When infrastructure gets damaged, even unharmed properties that depend on the damaged electrical, transportation and water systems lose value.

A few inundations in quick succession could start

a process of combined physical and socioeconomic decline. As the time and tremendous expense needed to repair water-damaged underground electric and telecoms lines, subways and rail lines, drinking water and wastewater treatment systems and power stations becomes apparent, property owners will start panic selling.

When it becomes clear that sea walls were not constructed in time and vital infrastructure has started to collapse, property values will follow, possibly triggering broader financial panics.

If properly planned for, one can imagine how such problems could be managed. But if the current denial continues until markets are caught unaware, there could be regional real estate panics and, flowing from those, major financial losses.

New York City's Department of Finance recently estimated the total assessed value of the city's property for fiscal year 2017 at more than \$1 trillion. That is real money, enough to help trigger problems in financial markets more broadly.

Collapsed property values means a collapsed tax base, which means local government will be hard pressed to make costly infrastructure repairs. And it is the infrastructure as a whole that property values depend on.

Hurricane Katrina, which famously hit New Orleans in 2005 and was quickly followed up by Hurricane Rita, offers a hint of what to expect.

Professor Bernard Weinstein, at the University of North Texas, has estimated the cost of those combined storms as \$250 billion in both direct and indirect damage. Weinstein found: 113 offshore oil and gas platforms destroyed, 457 oil and gas pipelines damaged and almost as much oil spilled as during the Exxon Valdez disaster. Katrina destroyed almost half of New Orleans's levees, wiped out most of the sugar crop and wreaked havoc on the oyster industry. Insurance companies paid out \$80 billion.

Most shockingly, Katrina killed 1,836 people across the Gulf, most of them senior citizens who were trapped in houses or abandoned in nursing homes.

We forget the magnitude of this damage in part because the real estate and entertainment industries in New Orleans embraced the rebuilding process with such gusto and denial. They were, after all, thrilled that the storm did its worst damage to poor black neighborhoods like the Ninth Ward.

Since Katrina, the Eastern Seaboard has been lucky. An unusually high percentage of hurricanes have been turning out to sea rather than making landfall. Ironically, recent research by James P. Kossin suggests this might be a short-term side effect of global warming. Just as a hotter sea surface temperature creates more hurricanes, a hotter land mass creates more vigorous vertical wind shear, which acts to block the arrival of hurricanes. That said, this natural protective pattern is not perfect, storms do make landfall and the pattern of wind shear blocking hurricanes will likely change as other elements of the climate system are transformed.

Regardless, with a rapidly rising sea level, the near future promises more metropolis-flooding mega storms.

DEFENSIVE PREPARATIONS

The New York City tristate area offers a glimpse into the possibilities and pathologies of planning for sea-level rise. After 2012, when Hurricane Sandy did \$50 billion in economic damage, including destroying or damaging 650,000 homes, it was clear something needed to be done. Eventually Congress allocated about \$60 billion in federal aid for recovery and resilience work in the impacted area. But the pace of disbursement has been painfully slow.

One example is repairing the L line's Canarsie Tunnel, connecting northern Brooklyn to Manhattan. Flooded during Sandy, the tunnel is now badly corroded and is set for a \$477 million, one-and-a-half-year closure for a vital overhaul. That's just one short tunnel.

The city is now building a barrier around lower Manhattan, called the “Big U.” Designed to be covered with grass and serve as public open space, the wall will run from 42nd on the east side, along the shore and up to 57th street on the west side. Construction will take years and cost billions.

At this rate and in this fashion, it is hard to imagine how the city's entire 520-mile coastline could be secured. Worse yet, half preparations are, in some ways, as bad as no preparation. As the *Rolling Stone's* Jeff Goodell said of New York City's largely symbolic efforts thus far, “Barriers, dikes and levees make people feel safe, even when they are not.”

Meanwhile, in a clear subsidy to unsustainable gentrification, the city is also planning to build a \$2.5 billion tramline along the Brooklyn and Queens waterfront, where old industrial warehouses are giving way to luxury high-rises. Similar insanity is found in New Jersey, where several groups of coastal homeowners, many of whom have subsidized government-provided flood insurance, are suing to prevent construction of protective sand dunes.

Eventually, cities that did not build sea barriers soon enough and high enough will get hit. Inundated by storms coming in close succession, some cities will find themselves too broke to rebuild their infrastructure and a process of real and metaphoric rot will set in. As public services decline, so will property values, each feeding the other; the rotting and molding landscape will be the visual symptom of a political-economic spiral of a shrinking tax base, disinvestment and abandonment.

Eventually, those who can will leave the coast. A study by University of Georgia demographer Mathew Hauer projects that 250,000 people in New Jersey will be forced to move by rising seas by 2100. In Florida, Hauer projects that 2.5 million people will have to leave their homes by that date.

Perhaps some of the ravaged coastal cities will become sources of scrap. High-quality housing stock in dying coastal cities might be worth disassembling by scavengers in search of bricks, copper pipe, slate tiles, windows, doors and old-growth hardwood lumber to sell to inland construction markets. We've seen that pattern in the Rust Belt: for much of the 1990s St. Louis's top export was old bricks bound for the booming Sunbelt where its rubble was repurposed as patios bought on credit.

What will happen in Dhaka, Lagos, Karachi or Rio? All are megacities situated on flat terrain close to sea level in countries already in crisis, legendary for

corruption and poor planning. One has to assume that as the future impacts of climate change become obvious, many more people will migrate inland or attempt to go abroad.

INFRASTRUCTURAL CHOKE POINTS

The geography of global capitalism relies disproportionately on coastal cities as seats of commerce, trade, research, transportation, and education. They are the nodes that link the world economy together.

Much industrial production and the global food system, for example, depends not only on what happens in factories and fields but also on a small number of infrastructure bottlenecks along international supply chains at key ports, airports, road and rail links and politically sensitive maritime straits like the Panama and Suez canals.

A recent study by the British think tank Chatham House found that 55 percent of the global grain trade passes through one of fourteen “chokepoints,” all of which are vulnerable to extreme weather like local flooding, rising sea levels and the associated political and military conflict.

Shut enough of the chokepoints and the global flow of food will be threatened. Chatham House found that about 20 percent of global wheat exports pass through the Turkish Straits. Similarly, more than 25 percent of global soybean exports pass through the Straits of Malacca, which run between Malaysia and Indonesia.

The world got a glimpse of how local flooding can impact global supply chains in 2011 when flooding in Thailand inundated much of Bangkok, including more than 1,000 industrial facilities that made everything from cars and cameras to hard drives. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction estimates the Thai floods reduced global industrial production by 2.5 percent. The world’s top three insurance companies paid out \$5.3 billion in claims.

THE PERMANENT EMERGENCY

As coastal cities slide into ruin and those who can migrate inland do so, inequality and relative deprivation will increase. Those left behind will be angry and have little stake in maintaining a social order that leaves them in a sacrifice zone. Who will be the last one out? If American history thus far offers answers, the poorest of the poor, undocumented climate refugees, might be the scavengers and squatters in the dead cities.

One can imagine left-wing social

movements emerging in these zones, or entirely reactionary millenarian ones, or just widespread, apolitical criminality. Any and all of these will, in lieu of radical social change, be met with an increasingly repressive paramilitary state response — checkpoints, SWAT patrols, National Guard, racist and rightist vigilantism.

We saw the patterns previewed on the Gulf Coast after Katrina. When local governments offered help to New Orleans, most of it came as heavily armed police. This was in large part because after almost 50 years of federally subsidized law-and-order, most cities and counties have a surplus of repressive capacity, yet almost nothing in the way of disaster-oriented civil defense.

A permanent state of emergency in the moldering, coastal, muck zones could become the norm. Thus the rising waters of climate change threaten to erode not only beaches but also civil liberties.

Mass migration and a racist backlash to it are already hallmarks of the early climate crisis. By the 2030s and 2040s, far more people will likely be on the move. Already, right-wing demagogues from Arizona to Cote d’Ivoire, to Myanmar, to Paris have been raging against the outsiders. Too often the demagogues successfully ride the fear and rage to power, and once there, turn state repression against immigrants and other poor people.

Thus, as drought, neoliberalism and militarism produce crises, warfare and waves of refugees in the Global South, in the North they produce a reactive, opportunistic, authoritarian state hardening.

SOLUTIONS

The good news is we have all the technologies we need to save civilization from climate collapse: solar and wind electrical grids; electric vehicles; the ability to re-wild wetlands and build artificial barriers to break and block the power of the sea. And we very well can develop the political capabilities to win over a majority behind the policies that will preserve the health and security of that majority.

Just as importantly, we already have the technology to strip CO₂ from the atmosphere. That technology is fairly simple and has been in submarines for decades. The problem was always how to safely store the CO₂.

Now, scientists in Iceland have recently created a process that strips CO₂ from the atmosphere and turns it into rock. The process is called “enhanced weathering” because it mimics one of the natural processes by which CO₂ is washed out of the atmosphere and bound to rockworks by mixing carbon

dioxide and hydrogen sulfide with water, and injecting it underground into Basalt rock formations. Within two years, the CO₂ in the water mixture “precipitates” into a white, chalky solid, a carbonate rock similar to limestone. Lucky for us, Basalt rock, the feedstock of this process, is one of the most common rock types on Earth.

Already, in Reykjavik, a geothermal power plant strips and stores 5,000 metric tons of CO₂ a year. That only equals the annual emissions of about 2,000 cars. But the point is we have the technical ability to strip atmospheric CO₂ and safely store it.

However, like proper defense of cities from the sea, there is no way the profit motive or market relations can bring this technology to scale. The world economy is producing about 40 billion metric tons of carbon emissions a year. At current prices, stripping out this much emissions would cost about 24 trillion dollars, a sum equal to 133 percent of the annual U.S. GDP.

Free-market boosters for enhanced weathering technology push the idea of selling its artificially created limestone as building material. The economics don’t make any sense. Why buy expensive rock when cheaper natural rock is available?

Clearly the private sector and the profit motive cannot deploy enhanced weathering technology at the scale needed, nor push a rapid energy transition, nor build coastal protections at the scale and speed necessary. But none of these tasks is technically or economically impossible. The mechanism needed in each case is state action and the public sector.

One more bit of good news. A radical climate solution, counterintuitive perhaps, requires that we use more, not less, energy. But energy, in the form of solar energy, is the one economic input that is truly infinite.

Our mission as a species is not to retreat from, or to preserve, something called “nature,” but rather to become fully conscious environment makers. Extreme technology under public ownership will be central to a socialist project of civilizational rescue, or civilization will not last.

Christian Parenti is the author of Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence. This article was originally published in the Summer 2017 edition of Jacobin (jacobinmag.com).



ROAD TO THE SUN

Dystopian themes abound in popular culture. In a world wracked by climate change, war, mass migration and a growing gulf between the super-rich and everyone else, imagining the worst has become its own industry. But what might it feel like to live and work in a future society that has begun to heal a damaged planet even as people continue to be their messy, imperfect selves?

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

U.S.—MEXICAN BORDER

“People are dying,” the reporter’s voice cracked. At his feet, skeletal families raised thin arms. He pointed to the refugees around him, tens of thousands, panting with cracked lips, dying in the dust. Their eyes gazed north, to the soldiers and the great wall barring their path.

“Heat waves have destroyed Mexico’s crops and left a nation on the move,” the reporter said, kneeling beside a father cradling his child. “These refugees camped here along the border are seeking entry into the United States, or simply food.” From the other side of the border, the chants of American protesters echoed.

The father stood on shaky legs and walked to the wall. Border guards aimed their rifles at him, hollered for him to stop. He held his baby up to them. More parents lifted their children, limp as dolls. They pleaded loudly until the father, in a spasm of a tears and grief, threw his baby over the wall.

Reflexively, a soldier aimed his gun at it as if it were a clay pigeon. Horrified screams followed as someone in the crowd on the American side caught it.

The reporter tried to talk but broke down. Within minutes, a photo circled the world of a U.S. soldier, aiming a rifle at a baby flying through the air.

NEW YORK TWENTY YEARS LATER

Kisses flew like butterflies. Lorenzo caught one, winked at the couple who blew it and handed it to his boss, Annie. She took it and pretended to powder her cheeks. Confetti swirled around their hard hats. Crowds cheered.

“This is incredible,” Lorenzo yelled over the noise. She nodded and pointed to the heavy tractor, nicknamed The Beast. It looked like a house on tank treads. The Governor sat on top and blew the horn. Lorenzo knew they depended on that damn thing. Dozens of road crews were following the tractors as they stamped new solar panels over old highways. His team was going from New York to the Mexican border, bolting and wiring panels to soak in sunlight and churn out electricity.

“That your girl?” Annie asked and Lorenzo saw Nefeesha’s big Afro and wide eyes as she waved.

She tugged her black shirt with the white question mark. It was her favorite piece of clothing. In bed, she stretched it like a trampoline between her knees. They both were undocumented and the shirt expressed what

she felt, that nothing was stable in their lives. Nothing. Until the Green Deal. On the news, the President said if they stop carbon emissions, they can stop the heat waves. The government needed millions of workers and offered citizenship in return for service. Lorenzo signed up for a road job. He didn’t like being away for months but in the end, he’d be a citizen and his girlfriend would not wear a question mark to bed each night.

PENNSYLVANIA

Every day, they stepped into a rose-colored dawn, leaned against The Beast, quietly drank coffee. Lorenzo knew their names: Leo the wrestler turned engineer, Stanley the pimpled, opiate junkie turned electrician. Politeness separated them. They didn’t know each other, except for Sage, who never shut up.

“It is sacred work to save the Earth,” he chimed this morning, patting each of their shoulders. His large eyes

WEST VIRGINIA

“So, how’d we get here, Pimples?” Leo jabbed at Stanley. It was night. Orange cones blinked like party lights across the new highway. Spools of cable hung over their shoulders. Stanley turned his collar up to hide his acne.

“I mean, how did two white guys fall so low,” Leo said, leaning in to whisper, “stuck here with illegal spics and a dyke boss? Was it drugs?”

“Yes,” Stanley said through a tight jaw. “Opiates. I crave ‘em bad. Every day, I have to say, ‘Don’t do it.’” He stared at Leo, “But I’m lucky, bad as it’s been. I’ve never been hooked on what you’re hooked on.”

“What’s that, Pimples?” Leo sneered.

“Hate.” Stanley, walked away, said louder, “You’re addicted to hate.”

SAGE WAS ONE OF THOSE WORKERS WHO TALKED ABOUT THE SOLAR HIGHWAY AS IF IT WAS THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

and round face made him look like a six-foot-tall child with a dog-eared copy of Walden crammed in his back pocket. “Sacred work,” he repeated.

A line of judgement passed through their eyes. He was a Road Freak. One of those workers who talked about the solar highway as if it was the Second Coming of Christ. It will stop the hurricanes that battered the coastal cities. It will temper the heat waves that baked the land. They shrugged at the lectures, almost feeling guilty for not sharing his politics. Lorenzo just wanted his papers. Most of the crew just wanted to make money. And drink their coffee in peace.

Annie climbed down from The Beast, her cornrows frizzy, her freckled face still sleepy. Sage patted her shoulder and she scowled. When his back was turned, she squatted and pretended to pee on the solar panels. The crew laughed. Sage shot around and saw Annie nonchalantly checking her nails. When he turned again, the others pretended to piss on the panels to. She doubled over and again he turned, seeing them casually sip from their cups. They bonded over this serious, political man being spun by their laughter.

VIRGINIA

Lorenzo woke early. He leaned over the rail of The Beast and stared at the highway, knowing that somewhere at the end of it was his citizenship. On the road he saw a young black woman with thick arms covered in tattoos, calligraphy stretching up to her neck. She leaned on a shovel and rubbed a monitor attached to her ankle.

“Hello,” called Lorenzo but she shot him a dirty look and walked farther off. He shrugged but when the crew came out, rubbing sleep from their eyes, he asked Annie who she was.

“The President is panicked we won’t get the highway done in time,” she said. “The scientists are panicked the world’s gonna burn up. They need more labor. They offered early leave to nonviolent prisoners if they work on the road. This one’s name is Andre.”

“You sure she’s nonviolent,” Lorenzo teased.

“Who the fuck knows?” Annie laughed, climbing on The Beast, boots clanging on the ladder.

Leo sidled up to him. “Who’s the gangbanger?” he asked. Lorenzo could smell the alcohol on his breath but he kept his gaze on Andre. She stared at the highway’s horizon. He knew what she was looking for and how far away it was.

NORTH CAROLINA

"Get the hell away from me," Andre shouted and pushed Sage back. Everyone looked up. Oh no, here it is. She's going to pop.

"I don't want to hear that shit," she panted, as her hard hat rolled on the ground. The crew giggled as Sage held his book, face red as an apple. Annie stopped The Beast. It shuddered to a halt, its tank treads steaming. She climbed down, scooped up the hard hat and thrust it back to Andre. She pointed at the road that never seemed to end.

They began exchanging words but the others couldn't hear what they said. It was like a strange pantomime of empathy. Annie made a motion as if holding bars, she tapped her finger against her head then pointed back to Andre, who nodded. Andre put her hard hat back on.

Annie walked back to The Beast, told Sage to knock it off with the preaching and climbed back into the driver's seat. Curious, the men looked at each other. Lorenzo scaled the ladder and asked, "What did you say to her?"

She stared at the road. "I told her I was once in jail too."

SOUTH CAROLINA

The crowds between cities grew thin; one or two supporters who used their "Solar Hope" placards to fan themselves in the heat and then no one. Just road.

Annie drove The Beast up hills and into valleys, around mountains and through towns. The road seemed endless and the distance sapped their strength. At the end of their shifts, they would all climb the vehicle and look up and down the new highway that glowed like gold at sunset.

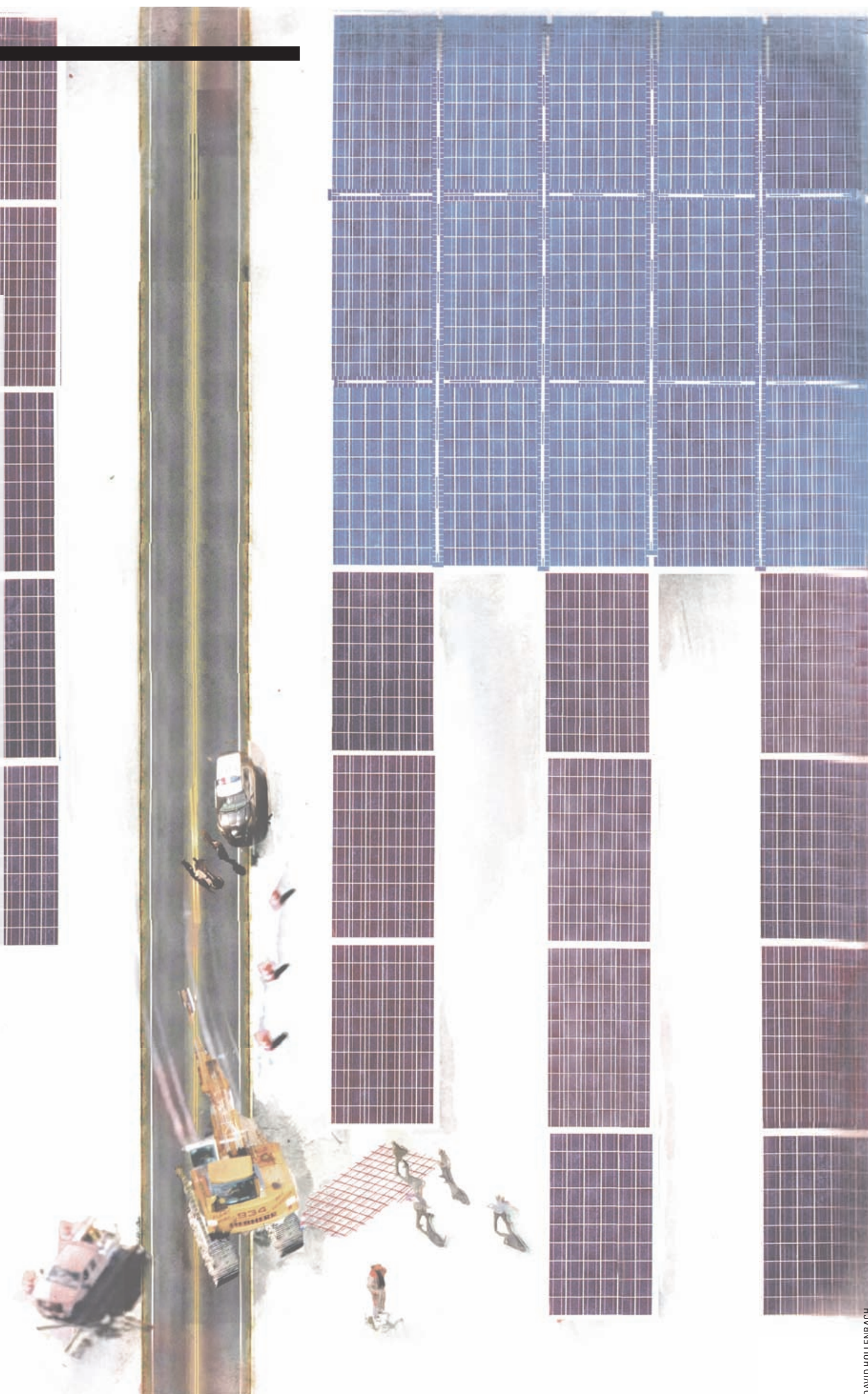
They were worried. Only a few test runs had been done. If the solar road didn't turn on, they'd be laughingstocks, the president voted out and the Green Deal done. The Conservatives would regain the White House. Lorenzo's citizenship offer, cancelled. Andre thrown back behind bars. But it was Sage who stared at the new highway the longest. "The planet," he'd mutter. "The planet."

The Beast moved across the land; it squatted, gears squealed and when it rose again, new panels were stamped on the cement. The road crew knelt like monks; Stanley and Lorenzo bolted the solar cells. Andre ran cable to the grid. The interconnected system would fuel the electric, self-driving cars and buses, even some of the small cities by the highway.

Bolt. Wire. Cable. The rhythm of work hypnotized their bodies. They woke at dawn. They sweated. They pulled muscles. They cursed the sun that toasted their arms and necks until at night, when they undressed, they looked like zebras.

Leo, showed his tan to Andre and asked if it made him "black." Stanley told him to shut up but he kept at it until Andre came over, grabbed his crotch and said, "Nope, not yet." They howled at Leo who ironically said, "I'm so racist." His laughter sputtered and he stood

Continued on the next page



DAVID HOLLENBACH

ROAD TO THE SUN

Continued from previous page

silently, seeing himself through their eyes, and left.

Stanley looked at his pocket mirror. His face was clearing up. Earlier he wanted to quit and call his dealer. But now the craving for drugs was a faint echo in his body.

He asked Lorenzo about the citizenship-for-service deal. “It was a better deal than my parents got,” he responded in a flat, monotone voice. “They died at the Massacre at the Wall.” The crew flinched. A heat wave had burned crops in Mexico and starving people piled at the U.S. border. The president at the time ordered soldiers to shoot anyone who tried to sneak across. Desperate parents threw babies over the wall. Others gave their kids to charity workers; some of them, later, were adopted by Americans. One of them was Lorenzo.

“It is an odd feeling, my friends,” Lorenzo said. “To work so hard, to save the life of a nation that destroyed my family.”

Andre rubbed her ankle monitor. “Tell me about it.”

GEORGIA

“Hey mi amor,” said Nefeesha. She was glowing. Lorenzo cupped the cell phone to his face. The rest of the crew was asleep. He kissed the screen, “What’s going on?”

She showed him a pregnancy test. Positive.

He dropped his phone. “Oh, my God. Oh, my God!” He picked it up.

She smiled, “I know. I know. Are you okay? Are you ready?”

Lorenzo left the trailer on wobbly legs, heart pounding, and stood on the road. The moon overhead was bright. It cast his shadow like a compass needle that pointed back to New York City.

He held the phone up to the moon. She was on the screen, rubbing her navel. “You’re going to be a father.”

ALABAMA

“The craving’s gone.” Stanley touched his chest in wonder. It was the first morning he woke up and did not want drugs. Tip-toeing out of the trailer, he rode his skateboard in the early light off a highway exit into a small town.

This looks like my childhood, he thought. Yep, the soul killing suburbs of America. He stared at the nice homes and remembered swallowing pills in his bedroom while his friends got jobs putting solar panels on roofs. They moved up in the world. He fell behind. Even digging through trash for food. Embarrassed, he ran away.

He sat on the street and hugged the skateboard. Rocking back and forth, he let himself imagine he was coming home after a long trip.

MISSISSIPPI

“Did you see this?” Sage showed Annie his tablet.

On it a man wearing an American flag as a mask said the solar road was a threat to the nation. He yelled it was the first step in a totalitarian New World Order. The country was going to change its currency to the Amero and fuse with Mexico.

“True patriots will never surrender.” He cocked his rifle and aimed it at the camera as the video cut out.

Annie sighed wearily. When the crew woke, she showed it to them. A deep chill settled in their limbs. The work rhythm was off. Andre smashed her finger with a hammer. Leo tripped over wires and skinned his knee. Everyone was looking at the tree line.

“I don’t want to get my head blown off,” Leo complained. The next day a big-bellied sheriff gave them bullet proof vests. But they were too bulky to work in. By evening, the National Guard patrolled the roadside and surveillance drones flew in circles over their heads.

ARKANSAS

A boiling wind rolled through Little Rock. The road crew sweated as crowds cheered from one side of the street. On the opposite sidewalk were protesters, calling them traitors and spitting racial epithets.

They laid solar panels on the city highway. Huge night lights beamed down, they looked like actors on a theater stage. Sage was signing autographs and giving the finger to the protesters.

“Hey, Hollywood,” Stanley shouted. “Want to help us out here?”

Sage kept on autographing a solar highway pamphlet for a fan, but when he turned darkness swallowed the city. Screams. Buildings draped in shadows. Eyes of shock. Eyes of fear. Eyes of rage.

People used cell phones as flashlights. Cars slowed to a crawl. Annie was on her walkie talkie, gesturing furiously. “I say yes. Pull the switch.”

She hung up. “The heatwave knocked out grids from here to Baltimore,” she said. “The mayors are panicked about riots. They want us to turn on the solar road.”

Scrambling, Andre plugged cables. Stanley and Leo read the meters. Annie shouted through a megaphone at the crowd, “Get ready!” She put her cell phone into the mic. Michael Jackson’s “Billie Jean” blasted a rolling bass and snappy drum. She gave Andre a thumbs up. The solar road brightened like a heavenly path. People awed, stepped on it lightly at first and then firmly. Some jumped. Annie bobbed as Michael Jackson played from her megaphone. People began to boogie. The city became an ethereal dance floor. Leo moonwalked for the pointing crowds. Lorenzo felt Nefeesha’s call. He picked up his phone and saw her in New York, belly large. In the background, people danced on a bright solar street. Stanley, fingers trembling, called his sister, who stared in shock from the screen then smiled. He panned the camera to show his old friends on the solar road, dancing in the light.

EAST TEXAS

“Welcome to Texas,” Annie shouted. The road crew didn’t answer, the sun ground them down to a rueful forward motion. Bolt. Wire. Cable. They worked with grim faces, scanning the trees out of the corners of their eyes. No National Guard. The silence of the land was as heavy as the heat. The Beast backed and they all ducked.

Slowly, they stood and laughed at their paranoia until Sage began to teeter. Blood sprayed from his neck. He tried to walk, left a dark red handprint on the vehicle and fell. Andre screamed. The crew surrounded him but more gunshots rang through the air. They scattered.

WEST TEXAS

The National Guard kept the reporters behind the orange cones. They shouted questions, waved microphones and pointed cameras. The road crew squatted by The Beast, staring at the open road. Who’d be next?

The old cement highway stretched like an open grave before them. Sage. Sweet, pain-in-the-ass Sage. They felt the weight of him on their shoulders. Andre got up, took one of the spray cans and palmed the space next to his bloody handprint. She sprayed her handprint next to his. “Sacred Work,” she scrawled, then passed the spray can to Stanley and Lorenzo. They made their mark and gave it to Annie and Leo. Crawling over The Beast, they covered it with handprints. Andre climbed into the cab with Annie, who revved the engine. The crew picked up their tools and drove away to finish the job.

NEW MEXICO

The sun set on the highway. Weary and proud, they lugged their tools in. Annie called to Andre, who came with a panel under her armpit. The crew circled them, smiles on their faces.

Annie gave her a folder. “Today you worked your last mile. Here are your release papers. You’re free.”

Andre palmed her face. Leo popped a bottle of champagne and foam fizzled out. Andre drank and let some roll down her shirt. She reached into her tool bag for her pliers. The monitor around her ankle fell to the ground. She picked it up and hurled it. Walking slowly, she flung her arms out and then ran as fast as she could. They watched her become a faraway dot inside the setting sun.

ARIZONA

Arizona was an oven. Lorenzo had a sonogram image of his child on his hard hat. Leo’s beard was thick as a bush; Stanley’s face was a thin arrowhead of cheekbones and eyes. Andre was riding with Annie in The Beast, cornrowing her hair.

The sun was low and hard as if they worked under a tanning lamp. Sweat streamed down their necks and arms. They stripped off their shirts. Gripped water bottles that flashed like icicles.

The Beast laid panels on the dusty highway. Bolt. Wire. Cable. They followed it through desert and sunburnt rock, up slopes and down hills. Behind them, far behind, new cars and buses were being propelled by the energy of the road itself. The Green Deal was a success. They were joyful but that world was far away. Out here, another heat wave cooked them into jerky.

Dark clouds made a charcoal smudge in the sky. Cool wind ruffled their hair. Storm shadows swept over the land. A few drops of rain sweetened their mouths. More drops and a hard rain fell.

They turned their hats upside down like buckets and drank from the sky. They splashed each other’s faces. They felt all the miles of work washed from them as if by nature’s holiness. They yelled Sage’s name.

U.S.–MEXICAN BORDER

They all rode The Beast to the Mexican border. A tornado of rose petals flew. Parents lifted children to touch the handprints on it. Crowds cheered.

Mexico’s solar road crew greeted them. They hugged the haggard men and women, shared stories and cases of Tecate beer. At the ceremony, an environmental scientist took the microphone and said, “We have done a great thing here. Carbon emissions are plummeting. The Earth has turned a corner!”

Lorenzo left early. Nefeesha was due and he was catching a flight to New York that night. But he felt a strange memory pull at him like a magnet. He strode down the highway, walked over new solar panels, trying to pin it down.

Where? What?

He turned onto a small path that ended in dust. The memory slid into place. He was here again; the Massacre at the Wall, where his mother and father died. Following the faded images of the past, he entered an abandoned building. He touched the door frame gently.

His phone buzzed. On it he saw Nefeesha, her face exhausted but happy. “I have someone I want you to meet,” she said. Lorenzo stood dizzily between two worlds, the old and the new, cradling the phone with his child’s face in his hands. The newborn’s screams echoed through the ruins.

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ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL FEMINISM?

The H-Spot: The Feminist Pursuit of Happiness
BY JILL FILIPOVIC
NATION BOOKS, 2017

The Mother of All Questions
BY REBECCA SOLNIT
HAYMARKET BOOKS, 2017

By Lauren Kaori Gurley

New York Times opinion writer Jill Filipovic recalls some of the happiest moments of her early adulthood were spent alone in taxis, speeding down the FDR in Manhattan, watching the sun rise over factories, billboards and bridges along the East River after late nights spent with friends or lovers. Like many college-educated American women, Filipovic — an upwardly mobile NYU graduate and self-identified “overachiever” — was hit with conflicting societal pressures as she reached the latter half of her twenties: to find a man she wanted to marry, have children, break “glass ceilings” in her workplace, be thin and normatively attractive, possess a healthy relationship to food and an active sex life. Fulfilling all of these expectations felt impossible at times, but in these early morning hours looking out at the city lights, Filipovic would tell herself, that even if she wasn’t happy, at least she had come this far.

In her new book, *The H-Spot: The Feminist Pursuit of Happiness* (Nation Books, 2017), first-time author Filipovic often loses sight of her relative position of power as a white woman with a graduate degree as she argues that we need a revamping of the institutions of marriage, parenthood, labor and sex toward the feminist pursuit of happiness, and away from basic equality. Her vision comes in contrast to another recent release, *The Mother of All Questions* by Rebecca Solnit, veteran San Francisco-based activist, historian and *Harper’s Magazine* columnist, who is 22 years Filipovic’s senior. In Solnit’s latest collection of essays, she challenges the notion that “cookie-cutter” happiness — hav-

ing a “spouse, offspring, private poverty, [and] erotic experiences” — is indeed a worthwhile pursuit for feminists. Instead, Solnit advocates for women to devote their lives to dismantling the institutions that have bolstered American

patriarchal society.

Despite their conflicting prescriptions, Filipovic and Solnit raise an important question: Can there be a unified agenda for the feminist movement in the United States, and if so, what are its guiding principles? Throughout the 20th century, feminist movements in the United States have grappled to define the aims of feminism, and over the last 50 years, they have struggled to create an agenda for feminists that would not be limited to the issues of upper and middle class heterosexual white women. As was hotly debated in conversations surrounding the Jan. 21 Women’s March on Washington, the challenges facing working women in the United States do not all look like those experienced by Filipovic or Solnit.

But in *The H-Spot*, Filipovic attempts to formulate a feminism that could address the issues of the majority of women. Although “the details are different and the struggles are often more pronounced” among poor women of color, the “overarching questions [facing all American women are] similar,” she writes. For Filipovic, who speaks largely from her own perspective (discussing how she made the decisions to marry and forgo motherhood) though also incorporating statistics and interviews, the central questions of feminism today involve sex, marriage, childbirth, work and food. She argues for paid leave and universal childcare — and reports that childless women claim higher levels of happiness than those with offspring. “Sex,” she writes, “is the thing that

many women report brings them the most pleasure, and also one that has brought many of us the most pain.” According to Filipovic, a feminist “pleasure-centered public policy” would be directed toward making interpersonal relationships (conventional and non-conventional), motherhood, work and sex pleasurable and fulfilling for all women. While the breadth of her book is extensive, the depth of her discussion of these issues and recommendations remain surface-level — and largely tailored to an audience that looks like herself.

If Filipovic wants to improve institutions and social norms, Solnit is ready to throw many of them out, particularly the notion that happiness should be the aim of a feminist movement. “The problem may be a literary one: we are given a single

sogyny in America — but offers little in practical frameworks for overcoming the patriarchy behind it.

WHAT WOMEN WANT: Jill Filipovic (left) & Rebecca Solnit.

2017 is a strange year to discuss the feminist pursuit of happiness, as it will go down in history books as a major setback for women’s rights in the United States, a time when many of the institutions that have promoted and protected women’s social and economic equality have come under attack by the executive and legislative branches. It is also a year when one would expect feminism and its proponents to be on the defense — yet the Jan. 21 Women’s March was the largest day of protest in U.S. history, and a sign that women are willing to re-think the aims of feminism. While Filipo-

IF FILIPOVIC WANTS TO IMPROVE INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL NORMS, SOLNIT IS READY TO THROW MANY OF THEM OUT.

vic and Solnit offer at times insightful analysis of some of the most important questions women face, there is a lack of urgency in their voices, and too little discussion of the women whose livelihoods and happiness are most at stake.



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QUEER LIFE THROUGH THE AGES

Expanded Visions: 50 Years of Collecting
LESLIE-LOHMAN MUSEUM OF GAY &
LESBIAN ART
LESLIELOHMAN.ORG
THROUGH OCT. 29

By Gena Hymowech

Most people have never heard of Charles W. Leslie or J. Frederick “Fritz” Lohman. It’s a shame when you work so long — over 50 years — to shape a culture and remain largely unappreciated. Simply put, queer art would not be what it is today without these men. The couple saved works that would have otherwise been thrown away, and created a collection of more than 30,000 pieces, according to a press release. In 1987, their gallery became a nonprofit, and by 2011, Leslie (Lohman died in 2009) had a museum on his hands — the first of its kind, their website tells us. “Expanded Visions” celebrates their achievements.

It would have made more sense to call it “Queer Life Through the Ages,” because that’s what you’re getting. Sophia Wallace’s 2009 photo *Untitled (Ena and Sin)* and Arthur Hammer’s 2005 oil painting *Jack and Harvey* are quite striking in this respect. Wallace’s features two topless women embracing. We don’t know what their relationship is, but their smiles make us think they’re thrilled to have found each other. It’s an intimate piece, but we don’t feel like we’re intruding. Rather, we’re meant to be standing there, cheering them on, as Annie Leibovitz’s influence shines through.

Jack and Harvey is a portrayal of Jack Franks and Harvey Moledzky, a couple who first met in 1962. They appear content, but also have defensive body language and don’t touch. This not touching, we are



told, “Was typical for queer couples of their generation when seen in public.”

Works by Janet Bruesselbach, Zackary Drucker and Amos Mac challenge the typical trans narratives. Bruesselbach’s *A Lady Betwixt (Robin)*, a painting from 2015, and Mac and Drucker’s *Distance Is Where The Heart Is, Home Is Where You Hang Your Heart #21*, a 2011 photo, don’t feature crime victims, sex workers or activists fighting to use the restroom (not that there is anything wrong with those folks). By placing a nude trans body in a domestic atmosphere, each makes you think about how rarely the media shows trans people in everyday scenarios. (Well, maybe the nude part isn’t so typical.)

Another piece challenging typical trans narratives is *Empire*, a 2015 photo created by André Tavet — the name artists André St. Clair and Tavet Gillson have taken for their collaboration. Through the magic of technology, St. Clair presents as a man and a woman in the same photo. The woman is straddling the man and wearing revealing underwear as the man grabs her ass. It resembles your average hip-hop cover and could be interpreted as a plea to hip-hop to become more inclusive; a commentary about the nature of low and high art; a playful way of expressing self-love; a protest against the commodification of women’s bodies; a PSA about the dangers of assuming someone’s gender; and a sly way of saying there are already a bunch of queer people in hip-hop and we just don’t know it because they’re too terrified to come out. I don’t think it’s a coincidence that *Empire* — that popular TV show about queerness in the hip-hop community — was chosen as the title.

Zanele Muholi’s *Being* series from 2007 and *Untitled (Charles and Fritz)*, a 1975 pastel study for

a painting by Marion Pinto, show queer eroticism coexisting with reverence. Muholi’s work — a trio of pictures of black queer women — is as hot as a Sunday in August, but also features, in one photo, facial expressions that would not look out of place on a wedding day. In Pinto’s work, Leslie and Lohman cherish a deep emotional connection while enjoying a sensual experience. Muholi’s work flies in the face of the idea that queer women aren’t sexual, while Pinto’s challenges the idea that queer men are only about emotionless sex.

There are works in “Expanded Visions” that didn’t expand anything but my lack of patience: a photo of a blindfolded replica of a horse (Deborah Bright’s *Wild Secret Girl* from 1996); a black canvas with protuberances (Harmony Hammond’s *Tiny Aperture #3* from 2013); and a childish etching with a sticker (Nicole Eisenman’s *Untitled* from 2016), among others. I didn’t think these had a strong association with queerness at all, and I didn’t appreciate the visual impact. Maybe I’m just not the right audience.

Originally scheduled to run until May 21, “Expanded Visions” will now be on display until October 29 — which is good because it gives more people the chance to appreciate this couple’s unique contribution. Specifically, I hope queer artists who go ask themselves how they can push boundaries with the same force so many of these artists have.



Sophia Wallace
Untitled (Ena and Sin) 2009

Chitra Ganesh *How I learned* 2015

Horst P. Horst (aka Horst) *Male Nude I (Frontal)* NY 1952

DAYDREAMING DANGEROUSLY

Brick Body Kids Still Daydream

BY OPEN MIKE EAGLE
MELLO MUSIC

By Brady O'Callahan

Place and identity are intimately tied to one another. That's truer in no other musical genre than hip-hop. Kendrick Lamar reps Compton, Chance the Rapper praises Chicago, even Machine Gun Kelly gives a shout out to the "216," a reference to his native Cleveland. There's always a little bit of hometown pride inherent in the representation, as if only a place like home could spawn a talent like these emcees, whose circumstances and experiences make them unique and define them.

On *Brick Body Kids Still Daydream*, Open Mike Eagle applies microscopic focus to Chicago's Robert Taylor Homes, where he spent time as a child with his aunt and cousins, painting a grandiose picture of shared experience among communities of color.

The album kicks off with "Legendary Iron Hood," which finds Open Mike Eagle positioning himself as a superhero. He rattles off X-Men references, saying "Ain't nothing gonna stop me now." The album begins with a daydream, and what kid doesn't do this exact thing?

This Iron Hood character makes an appearance in the music video for "Brick Body Complex" as a masked Michael Eagle defending a model of three high-rise homes from a faceless white businessman. A young girl holds a sign that reads, "They forgot about the children." These same kids who would spend days dreaming of superheroes have their homes and very lives threatened. Iron Hood encounters a slew of young, white, wealthy community invaders: a yoga enthusiast, a wax-mustachioed man, a sun-hat-wearing woman sipping juice out of a mason jar.

For Eagle, and for these communities, gentrification is an imminent threat, a form of violence. In the case of the Robert Taylor Homes, the dismantlement

of the housing complex as Chicago moved to a low-rise, mixed-income public housing model in the early 2000s — the so-called Plan for Transformation — led to widespread displacement on the city's South Side.

In the "Brick Body Complex" video, the faceless villain destroys two of the high-rises before he is confronted by Iron Hood. Our villain threatens Iron Hood but our hero is unafraid. Troubled by this defiance, the villain demolishes the third and final high-rise, prompting Iron Hood to fight the villain. In an effort to unmask this ruiner of homes, Iron Hood unmask himself as well, and he is left to deal with the police and answer for his own "violence." You only need to be peripherally aware of the modern day news cycle to know how this story will end.

The song contains a call to attention — an enormous priority for Eagle. He's currently developing a comedy and music show for Comedy Central with actor Baron Vaughn titled "The New Negroes." The concept is based on a live show of the same name that seeks to expand and challenge ideas of black entertainment and black life in America. "A lot of times with the faces that people are making, it looks like they are hearing perspectives on things happening in everyday lives in a way they haven't thought about before," Eagle told the *New York Times* in 2016, describing the reaction the show received. *Brick Body Kids Still Daydream* seems to have the same goal.

Sonically, the album feels intimate. Relaxed beats ride under a calm cadence. Even at his most intense, Eagle feels as if he's gripping you by the shoulder and looking you in the eyes more than shouting from the rooftops. The album as a whole feels as if Eagle is sitting with you on your front stoop, shooting the breeze. The conversation changes from the impassioned accounts of community goings-on to happy bouts of nostalgia.

"95 Radios" portrays a desperate search for a radio in order to hear a song by a group from the neighborhood. The video explores a single community and the cast of characters that inhabit it. Later, Eagle marvels at being on the radio himself: "[A]

piece of me show feels personal, circled on all sides by used car commercials. It's worth it though, whole block listenin' ..."

Through his hyper-local focus on the Robert Taylor Homes, Eagle reveals the universality of his experience. Gentrification isn't just impacting Chicago. Just this September, a mass of people, organized by the Brooklyn Anti-gentrification Network (BAN), gathered in Crown Heights to protest plans to turn the disused Bedford-Union Armory into luxury apartments. Eagle knows the story well, even though it's happening in our own backyard half a country away, and he stands in front of us now warning of an unhappy ending for communities under siege.

Brick Body Kids Still Daydream ends with a heartbroken, angry, personal account by Eagle of his aunt's home being demolished and replaced by an empty lot, as if its mere presence was a detriment. "Who else in America deserves to have that feeling, where else in America will they blow up your village?" Eagle asks, but he already knows the answer: "They say America fights fair, but they won't demolish your timeshare." Black communities painted as violent and problematic are the first victims of urban renewal but, as Eagle notes in his lyrical effigy, neighborhoods are much more complex than the broad strokes that portray them. "It was people there and kids there and drug dealers and church folk," Eagle raps.

Eagle masterfully calls attention to the destruction of black lives wrought by gentrification. *Brick Body Kids Still Daydream* is a timely chronicle of a community in crisis and hopefully it reaches an audience with open ears. Eagle wants you to know that the sound of homes being demolished is the "sound of them tearing my body down ..." His album is a call for us to stand in the way.

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